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DE RUEHKH #1394/01 1631522
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3190
INFO RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 001394

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/11/2016

TAGS: PGOV PHUM PINS PINR EAGR SU

SUBJECT: JUBA, S CATHOLIC ARCHBISHOP ON PROBLEMS FACING THE SOUTH

Classified By: CG Juba R. Whitehead, Reason: Section 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Roman Catholic Archbishop of Juba, Paolino Lukudu Loro, discussed with CG on June 3 some of the major challenges facing the Equatoria region. Loro expressed his relief that the peace was holding but raised the ethnic hegemony of the Dinka, the situation in Yei, land tenure, and corruption as problems that must be resolved. End summary.

The Good News, and the Not So Good

¶2. (C) Loro said that he was relieved that peace still prevailed in Southern Sudan nearly a year and a half after the signing of the CPA. He said that the population continued to respect the SPLM/SPLA for its role in liberating the South from northern domination and bringing peace for the first time in two decades. He added, however, that in Juba and throughout Equatoria, the southernmost region of Southern Sudan, there was increasing criticism of the poor performance of the GoSS, especially in the delivery of basic services to the population. There was a growing perception that the peace dividend had mostly gone to official driving new cars and living on expense accounts.

Dinka Hegemony

¶3. (C) Loro said that the Dinka displaced from the North during the war and still remaining in the South posed a growing problem. Many Dinka were reluctant to leave the lush land of Equatoria for their harsher, more arid areas of origin. The oversized Dinka herds caused great damage to the fields of the local farmers; complaints from the Zande and Kakwa people often drew the Dinka response that the non-Nilotic tribes were not true Sudanese and should return to the Uganda and Congo, where they rightly belonged. Loro said that he feared that the growing tensions would one day erupt in an organized attack on the Dinka by the Kakwa and Zande population.

¶4. (C) Loro continued that there was a serious problem in Mvolo, a town located between Maridi and Rumbek, with Dinka Agar and aligned SPLA forces attacking and looting Jur villages. At least a dozen people were believed to have died. The root of the problem, he explained, was again cattle. The Dinka Agar had driven their herds onto traditional Jur farmlands, and when they protested, the predominantly Dinka SPLA had taken the Dinka Agar's side. Loro said the only permanent solution would be to move the Dinka back to their places of origin and thin the cattle herds to numbers that the land could sustain. He said that he did not know if GoSS President Salva Kiir would be willing or able to broker this outcome.

The Example of Yei

¶15. (C) Loro cited Yei as an example of the growing animosity between the local population and their erstwhile SPLA liberators. Violence against the local citizenry had come to head a week earlier when a SPLA soldier shot to death the Kakwa county health commissioner for no evident reason. Unlike other cases that had been swept under the rug, this time the SPLA arrested and charged the killer. Nonetheless, over 3,000 residents of Yei congregated to protest the shooting. Loro said that the SPLA had begun moving the 10,000 SPLA troops in Yei to a new staging area five miles east of Lainya, or about forty miles east of Yei on the Juba road. Already there were reports of problems over access of boreholes and housing.

Corruption and Land

¶16. (C) Loro said that corruption was increasing, which he described as inevitable. Senior SPLM officials had the attitude that since they had suffered in the bush for years fighting for freedom, and had won, it was now their turn to enjoy themselves. Loro said that land and housing were palpable manifestations of this mentality. With housing at a premium and land prices skyrocketing around Juba, there were multiple claims and counter claims about property ownership, with the powerful and well connected usually winning the struggle.

KHARTOUM 00001394 002 OF 002

Limited Access

¶17. (C) Loro said that the people of the South held the United States in great esteem for America's support of the southern cause, and for its generous assistance to the South. For this reason, the U.S. had a unique role to play in influencing the GoSS to resolve its problems peacefully and to establish responsible governance that benefited all, not just SPLM elites. Loro said that there was a role for the church as well. He was doing his best to influence events in the proper direction, Loro said, but he had limited access to the most senior circles of the GoSS other than on a protocol level.

¶18. (C) Following a visit to Lainya, where the county commissioner echoed Loro's report of growing tensions between the local population and SPLA troops over access to water points, we have arranged through an ongoing Lainya water/sanitation program to drill a new borehole near the barracks area to defuse the situation. Loro was probably correct in his assessment of his limited ability to influence the GoSS. He was reportedly very close to the late John Garang, a Protestant, but has never had particularly strong ties to Kiir, a practicing Roman Catholic.

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